

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-34 constitute all currently pending claims. Claim 1 is amended.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-9, 14-16, 28, and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,825,407 to Widell (“Widell”). Applicant traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is amended to require “the gap continuing from a first side face that is a side face of one of the adjacent punches to a second side face that is a side face of the other of the adjacent punches in the first direction.” Applicant submits that this limitation cannot read on a “‘gap’ being diagonally between, for example, projection 76 and projection 74” of Widell. (Office Action at 2.) Moreover, it is clear from Widell that elements 70, 74, and 76 are guide plates, and are not “punches,” while claim 1 requires that “the gap continuing from . . . a side face of one of the adjacent punches to . . . a side face of the other of the adjacent punches.” The Examiner, in the instant Office Action, correctly describes element 116 of Widell as “punches,” whereas elements 70, 74, and 76 are clearly not punches, even if they were to be characterized as projections.

Thus, Widell fails to teach this element of amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Widell. Applicant traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner appears to assert that, assuming the elements of independent claim 1, from which claims 11 and 12 depend, were each taught by Widell as alleged above, then the dimensions required by claims 11 and 12 would be obvious in light of Widell. Since each element of amended claim 1 is not taught by Widell, as explained above, Applicant submits that claims 11-13 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependence from claim 1.

Moreover, as the Examiner has indicated that claim 10 is allowable, dependent claim 13, which depends from claim 10, must also be patentable at least by virtue of its dependence from claim 10. Even if the limitations recited in dependent claim 13 alone were construed to be obvious in light of the teachings of Widell, this would fail to vitiate the patentability of parent claim 10. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 11-13.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

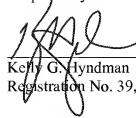
Applicant herewith petitions the Director of the USPTO to extend the time for reply to the above-identified Office Action for an appropriate length of time if necessary. Unless a check is attached, any fee due under 37 U.S.C. § 1.17(a) is being paid via the USPTO Electronic Filing System (EFS). The USPTO is also directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for

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the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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